United Nations S/2010/564

Security Council

Distr.: General
1 November 2010

Original: English

Report of the Security Council Mission to Afghanistan, 21 to 24 June 2010

I. Summary

1. In a letter dated 16 April 2010, the President of the Security Council informed the Secretary-General of the Council's intention to send a mission to Afghanistan in June 2010. The terms of reference for the mission were subsequently approved by the Council (see annex I to the present report). The mission, led by Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations, comprised representatives of all current members of the Security Council: Ambassador Thomas Mayr-Harting (Austria), Deputy Permanent Representative Mirsada Čolaković (Bosnia-Herzegovina), First Secretary Christiano Sávio Barros Figueirôa (Brazil), Ambassador Wang Min (China), Ambassador Gérard Araud (France), Ambassador Alfred Alexis Moungara Moussotsi (Gabon), Ambassador Yukio Takasu (Japan), Ambassador Nawaf Salam (Lebanon), Ambassador Claude Heller (Mexico), Ambassador Raff Bukun-Olu Wole Onemola (Nigeria), Minister Alexander A. Pankin (Russian Federation), Ambassador Ruhakana Rugunda (Uganda), Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and Ambassador Susan E. Rice (United States of America). The Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, joined the mission for parts of its visit.

2. This was the Council's fourth visit to Afghanistan since 2001, having previously visited in November 2003, November 2006 and November 2008. The mission left New York on 20 June and concluded its work on 24 June. The mission met with the President of Afghanistan, Hâmid Karzai, and members of his Cabinet, including the ministers of Defence, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Reintegration, Education, Social Affairs, Justice and Governance, and acting ministers of Interior, Public Health and the National Directorate for Security. It also met with key Afghan representatives, including the Speaker of the lower house (Wolesi Jirga) of the National Assembly, Yunus Qanooni, and chairs of the steering committees of the lower chamber; the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commissioner; the Independent Election Commission Chairman and Chief Electoral Officers; the Electoral Complaints Commissioners; and civil society organizations, women's activists and opposition leaders. International interlocutors included the Commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Senior Civilian Representative of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); the Office of the Special Representative of the European Union for Afghanistan; members of the

Please recycle

diplomatic community; and senior staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations country team. In Kabul, the mission paid a visit to the NATO Military Training Mission. The mission also visited Jalalabad, and Sheikh Mesri New Township, where it met tribal elders, university students, the Governor and the provincial reconstruction team, as well as members of the United Nations country team engaged with the resettlement camp (see annex II for schedule of meetings).

3. The timing of the mission was significant in the light of the Consultative Peace Jirga held in early June, the preparations for the Kabul Conference on Afghanistan in July, and the forthcoming legislative elections. The mission emphasized the Council's continued support to the people of Afghanistan and the long-term commitment of the international community to stability, reconciliation and reconstruction. In particular, it expressed support for the role of the United Nations in supporting Afghan-led efforts in these areas.

II. Key issues

Security situation

4. The mission noted its concerns at the significant rise in insecurity, especially the trends by insurgent groups towards complex suicide attacks, the near-doubling in the use of improvised explosive devices, indiscriminate attacks on civilians and the high number of targeted political assassinations, all of which threaten to overshadow political advances and which constitute the main obstacle to Afghanistan's stabilization efforts.

5. President Karzai outlined the progress made in developing Afghan security institutions and increasing the operational capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces. In partnership with international forces, the Afghan National Security Forces had started to seize control from the Taliban in strongholds in the south. Intermittent discussions by some international allies over withdrawal, however, created concerns regarding the sustainability of progress. President Karzai highlighted the importance of long-term international commitment and regional cooperation for a secure Afghanistan. High-level dialogue was under way to resolve practical differences and to forge new cooperative relations with neighbouring countries and other States and organizations in the region on both the security and the economic agendas.

6. Parliamentarians echoed the concern that statements declaring the military campaign unsuccessful and calling for international withdrawal risked giving the Afghan people the perception that the Taliban and Al-Qaida were winning. According to legislators, the conflict was having regional implications concerning Pakistan, with the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban now waging war against these two countries. The Speaker of Parliament underscored the critical role of international military support and the need for its continued presence in Afghanistan. He highlighted the importance of a shared understanding among the Afghan Government and its international partners of the nature of insecurity in Afghanistan and its contributing factors.

7. Afghanistan's experience demonstrated that only a combined political and military effort would defeat the armed opposition. One Afghan interlocutor estimated that only 20 per cent of the Taliban were irreconcilable and should be addressed through military pressure. The remaining 80 per cent joined the Taliban

for non-ideological reasons, such as a lack of economic opportunities, intimidation by the Taliban and local Government authorities and mistreatment. That category of armed opposition could be reconciled through a political process.

8. The Minister of Defence acknowledged the increased level of violence and attributed it partly to the introduction of ISAF forces in volatile areas. ISAF interlocutors agreed that security incidents had increased 88 per cent over the past 12 months owing to an increased operational tempo. All sides were agreed that building self-sustaining, capable Afghan security forces remained critical to the successful transition of security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Forces. The prediction for the months ahead was that violence would remain high, with the tipping point expected early next year. Much would depend on the extension of the Government's authority, the steps taken by Pakistan to curb insurgents' freedom of movement, international political and military will and stronger civil-military coordination to stabilize local districts.

International Security Assistance Force and the Afghan National Security Forces

9. Describing the ISAF Campaign Plan, the Commander of ISAF emphasized its focus on the growth and development of the Afghan National Security Forces and highlighted the progress made, noting that the Afghan National Army was ahead of schedule. He stressed that, after having received basic military training, only a limited number of units could be considered battle-ready and that the task of ISAF was to increase the current ratio. Collaboration between ISAF and Afghan security ministries was positive; as at June 2010, 85 per cent of Afghan National Army kandaks were being mentored and 46 per cent of Afghan National Police were being partnered with or mentored by ISAF forces. The Commander documented the 121 "key terrain districts" that were the main focus of joint efforts by ISAF and the Afghan National Security Forces and drew a distinction between these areas and more stable areas where "economy of force" operations were in place.

10. The Commander of ISAF explained that regional command operations in the South were geared towards creating spaces of contiguous security that would enable movement of goods and people. Increasing ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces troop concentrations in Regional Command South remained a priority; 102,000 troops would be stationed there by the end of this year, with an additional increase of 30,000 next year. The forthcoming Kandahar operations would focus on Kandahar City and key surrounding districts. Security operations would focus on building a ring of security around the city through increased checkpoints, increased presence of ISAF, Afghan National Security Forces and Afghan National Police presences and greater prevalence of Afghan National Civil Order Police in and around the city. Political efforts would include greater engagement with traditional leadership structures (shuras), resolving land disputes, improving ISAF contracting methods and increasing electricity supply. Significant and sustainable security improvements would take time, although progress was expected to be quicker within Kandahar City.

11. During its visit to the Kabul military training centre, the mission met with ISAF and Afghan trainers, and observed new Afghan National Army recruits. The mission was told that recruitment had increased, as had the number of instructors and the quality of training, including longer-term professionalization programmes. A key challenge remained the need to strengthen leadership staffing and capacities of

the Afghan National Security Forces, whose growth and development continued to be hampered by high attrition rates and retention challenges. Another key issue was giving due consideration to ethnic balance and a ratio between army and police that best supports security requirements and the transition to giving the Security Forces lead security responsibility. Salary increases were expected to have a positive impact. The Commander of the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan explained that training programmes stressed quality over quantity and emphasized literacy, with 30,000 members of the Security Forces in some form of educational programme, but noted that only 50 per cent of National Army troops had completed training. He also underlined the importance of having a sufficient number of trainers to meet the needs of the Afghan National Security Forces. With regard to mentoring, ISAF interlocutors noted that 40 per cent of district-level security operations were partnered between ISAF and the Security Forces. Partnering enables better intelligence collection and allows ISAF forces to hold the Security Forces to account.

12. The NATO Senior Civilian Representative described current NATO civilian priorities as stabilization, transition, reconciliation and a comprehensive approach. He pointed to significant improvements at the senior levels of the Afghan and Pakistani authorities, which were yet to be matched at the working level and in institution-to-institution exchange. ISAF commanders explained the current parametres of practical cooperation, which included four Afghanistan-Pakistan border centres staffed by military personnel. They further explained that Al-Qaida maintained a close relationship to the Pakistani Taliban, although a more enduring relationship existed between Al-Qaida and the Haqqani network.

13. ISAF interlocutors referred to a significant reduction of civilian casualties generated by ISAF and the Afghan National Security Forces compared with the same period a year earlier. All operations by special forces were jointly planned with the Afghan Government. Night operations were undertaken to reduce civilian casualties. Of those operations conducted at night, 78 per cent were conducted without a single shot having been fired and only 1.8 per cent resulted in civilian casualties. Afghan commandos, not their ISAF counterparts, were the first to enter houses. Reductions in civilian casualties, however, had yet to produce the desired and corresponding effect of change in Afghan perceptions. The Senior Civilian Representative of NATO noted that reducing civilian casualties was a key priority in NATO's comprehensive approach, together with stronger civil-military coordination in stabilization, transition and reconciliation efforts. Detention remains a sensitive issue for many Afghans, and the importance of transparent transition to Afghan lead could not be overemphasized. Efforts were currently being undertaken to ensure appropriate levels of Afghan participation and stringent Afghan-led review processes for detainees.

14. The Special Representative of the European Union for Afghanistan outlined the complementary efforts of the European Union rule of law and civilian police training mission in 16 provinces, with the active cooperation of the Ministry of Interior, to improve the sustainability of training recruits. The new operation plan of the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan focused resources on regional training centres and "train-the-trainers" programmes to support more sustainable police development. The lack of parallel development of Afghan corrections and judicial capacity remained a serious concern.

15. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan highlighted improved civil-military coordination with close cooperation among ISAF, the NATO Senior Civilian Representative and the Special Representative of the European Union. There was a feeling of mutual support among international institutions in Afghanistan and, although each operated under different mandates and priorities, they were working closely to coordinate and deliver coherent messages. Their common goal was to help achieve a stable and prosperous Afghanistan, while remaining respectful of Afghan culture, traditions and sovereignty. Regarding security transition, UNAMA continued to underscore the importance of incorporating governance and development processes, aligned with Afghan national priorities, in assessments and activities, the need for an equitable approach across provinces and transition arrangements adaptable to diverse local needs and conditions.

Reconciliation and reintegration

16. The importance of a comprehensive reconciliation and reintegration strategy reflects the wide consensus that there will be no military solution in Afghanistan in the absence of a political process. The London Conference on Afghanistan, held on 28 January 2010, endorsed a proposal to establish a fund for reintegrating mid-level insurgents, and for the Afghan Government to develop a comprehensive peace and reintegration programme. The head of this programme, Minister Massoom Stanekzai, explained how the initiative provides for the economic reintegration of insurgents and sets out a political reconciliation strategy addressing all levels of the insurgency. Its components include: a package of incentives, such as removal from the United Nations sanctions list or potential exile to a third country, or reconciliation among senior Taliban leaders; direct transitional assistance to individual insurgents for 90 days after their reintegration; district and community-led reintegration packages that benefit entire villages and communities; the establishment of a public work corps and an agricultural conservation corps to create employment opportunities for ex-combatants; and a literacy, vocational training and de-radicalization programme for ex-combatants and disenfranchised youth.

17. The reconciliation agenda was given further momentum by the Consultative Peace Jirga in early June, provided the parametres of and the framework for commencing talks and setting conditions. President Karzai characterized it as an important gathering, based on the Afghan tradition of inclusive decision-making, and stressed the decisive presence of women, with 21 elected secretaries of the 28 committees. Irrespective of some concerns voiced about the participatory nature of the jirga, it seemed that the grassroots was generally satisfied with the outreach efforts. The main recommendations and steps towards an inclusive peace process included the creation of the High Peace Council, a review of detention records, with a view to releasing those in custody without adequate evidence, and the request that the Security Council de-list individuals on the 1267 sanctions list of individuals and entities associated with Al-Qaida and the Taliban, as a concrete confidence-building measure.

18. In the context of the recent visit of the Monitoring Team of the Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee, President Karzai requested Security Council assistance with expediting the de-listing process and eventually extending the review process. With 137 names associated with the Taliban on the list and two weeks left prior to the

conclusion of the review, the mission explained that reviews were conducted on a case-by-case basis and guided by the principles of renouncing violence, laying down arms, breaking ties with Al-Qaida and fully respecting the Afghan Constitution. Much would be contingent on the ability of the Government of Afghanistan to promptly provide sufficiently detailed documentation to conclude the review.

19. Afghan legislators were united in emphasizing that peace in Afghanistan could be achieved only through an inclusive political process that should be compatible with the Afghan Constitution and not compromise the achievements of recent years, especially with regard to the status and rights of women, access to education, public health and other basic human rights. This opinion was also shared by interlocutors from the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and civil society organizations. Some parliamentarians noted that the Consultative Peace Jirga failed to address how to identify Afghanistan's enemies or how to structure the reconciliation process. It further failed to develop a common approach between Afghanistan and the international community on reconciliation.

20. One legislator suggested that it was now necessary to develop practical and structured frameworks and mechanisms for reconciliation jointly between the Afghan Government, civil society and the international community to reach out to the Taliban and Hezb-e Islami and bring them into the reconciliation mainstream. This could include the convening of an international forum resembling the Bonn Conference, where Afghan representatives, including the Government, civil society, the Taliban, Hizb-e Islami and anti-Taliban forces would negotiate peace under the aegis of the United Nations. The agenda could include such topics as frameworks for reconciliation, resolution of constitutional problems and processes to achieve stability and peace. The conference and its decisions should be Afghan-led and Afghan-owned, with the United Nations and the international community serving as guarantors of agreed conference outcomes.

21. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General reiterated that the reconciliation process itself had to be led by Afghans, but noted that the United Nations looked forward to playing a role in developing confidence-building measures and fostering dialogue among the various actors in Afghanistan. Similarly, he stressed the importance of fostering constructive engagement with regional players and the linkage between regional and national reconciliation efforts.

Elections

22. The months preceding the mission's visit had been marked by an intense debate over the constitutionality of a Presidential decree that questioned the holding of national legislative elections prior to any substantive long-term electoral reform, based on lessons learned from the presidential elections of 2009. Ultimately, there was general consensus that elections should go ahead, as the nomination of 2,677 declared candidates, 400 of which were women, indicated popular demand. Elections were also deemed essential for advancing democratic processes and reinforcing the much-needed legitimacy of Afghan institutions. Agreed implementation guidelines confirmed the change in the Independent Election Commission leadership, the appointment of the two international members of the Electoral Complaints Commission with an effective role and a reinforced guaranteed constitutional quota for women. The major difference with the previously held elections was the primary emphasis of greater Afghan sovereignty and ownership

geared towards better elections and a more transparent process. The international community's main area of support would be in building up credible and independent electoral institutions and balancing the need for capacity-building of the Independent Election Commission with ensuring they were given all the requisite assistance to be operational on the ground.

23. Afghan legislators, civil society representatives and the Chair of the Independent Election Commission all identified electoral security as the greatest challenge for the conduct of elections. Afghan legislators expressed concerns about the capacity of the Government to develop a coherent action plan for the opening of polling centres. With 80 per cent of districts insecure, failure to provide secure polling centres would further undermine public confidence in the freedom and overall legitimacy of elections, in addition to increasing the risks of perceived fraud. Insecurity further limited equal opportunities for electoral candidates to campaign, since many constituencies remained inaccessible, vulnerable to intimidation of the electorate, especially women, and in some areas, to direct threats by the Taliban and Hezb-e Islami towards candidates and their families.

24. The Independent Election Commission stressed the need to secure all polling centres, as only those that could be secured would open on polling day. Securing polling centres was crucial to mitigating the potential for fraud and protecting ballots and ballot boxes. The electoral law gave the Commission the authority to postpone elections in some constituencies, an option that needed to be considered at the right time. In terms of the infrastructure that would be used for polling centres, the Chair of the Commission explained that given Afghanistan's limited infrastructure, there were no alternatives other than to use schools and clinics, while trying to avoid using private facilities.

25. The Chair of the Independent Election Commission remained committed to holding credible elections, and thus far the problems encountered had not been insurmountable, with all deadlines met, the final list of candidates published and the election campaign period declared open. The Commission was committed to the principles of independence, transparency, fairness, inclusiveness and security, and to building on lessons learned from last year's elections. To ensure a level playing field, the Electoral Media Commission, part of the Election Commission had promulgated regulations applying to all candidates and has issued guidelines on private media coverage of the elections.

26. The Independent Election Commission valued the importance of a complaints mechanism for transparent elections and was reassured that the independent Electoral Complaints Commission, with offices in all 34 provinces, was mandated to adjudicate electoral complaints at the provincial level. The Electoral Complaints Commission members described themselves as a quality control mechanism, not running the elections, but certifying the results, which needed to be done relatively swiftly lest the legitimacy of the process be undermined. By their own account, the three Afghan Electoral Complaints Commission commissioners were fully united with their two international counterparts, working together to set up provincial offices and amend Electoral Complaints Commission internal regulations. They had thus far reviewed and adjudicated 428 challenges to the list of candidates. The 34 provincial tribunals gives the Electoral Complaints Commission a better chance of ensuring improved elections according to the principles of law enforcement and

justice, equal access for all, impartiality and close coordination with the Independent Election Commission.

27. The Independent Election Commission outlined the nature of its improved relationship with the United Nations, which was predicated on the understanding that the Independent Election Commission was the sole authority on elections and that the United Nations provided support in the form of technical and operational assistance, with advice provided and no decisions imposed. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General reinforced the message of Afghan leadership. UNAMA and the United Nations Development Programme and the Independent Election Commission jointly engaged to make these better elections than last year by balancing international support with respect for Afghan institutions.

28. The first example of this cooperation coincided with the mission's visit and was related to the ongoing vetting process, which risked seeing very few candidates excluded for their links to illegally armed groups. While the Electoral Complaints Commission had previously been responsible for vetting candidates, with assistance from UNAMA and ISAF, it was acknowledged that this year the Vetting Commission, chaired by the Independent Election Commission, consisted of representatives of the Ministries of Interior and Defence, and the National Directorate of Security. The very low indicative number of candidates to be excluded raised concerns over management of the vetting process, and raised public concerns from civil society and opposition figures. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, together with the Independent Election Commission, registered dissatisfaction with the process, and together drew this issue to the attention of the President and the competent ministries. As a result, the list was further reviewed and an estimated 32 candidates were excluded.

Governance, rule of law and human rights

29. International interlocutors warned that improvements in governance and service delivery were limited. Interlocutors pointed to corruption as the main factor affecting the confidence of the population in Government. Controlling, reducing and ultimately eliminating private armies remained a priority. Governance objectives revolved around increasing numbers and quality of Afghan Government civil servants. Filling the civil servant staffing chart (*Tashkil*) had been difficult due to insecurity and the lack of economic incentives and numbers remained disappointingly low.

30. President Karzai and his ministers noted the significant strides made in social, economic and development affairs, and highlighted the strengthening of institutional structures and marked improvements in the sectors of rural development, health and education and counter-narcotics. They acknowledged the need for enhanced efforts against poppy cultivation and drug production, trade and consumption, noting that a considerable share of related profits was being channelled to finance the insurgency, terrorism, corruption and criminal activities, including from abroad. Anti-drug issues would be further addressed under regional cooperation agendas. They stressed that counter-narcotics efforts were more successful in the Afghan-led provinces, where local Governments could make better use of controls and incentives. They added that with the build-up of security institutions, governance would follow, and that Afghanistan already rating high on the World Bank list of countries with checks and balances in place. They further countered the criticism of widespread corruption,

much of which was instead attributed to the international community, in a country that is trying to rebuild its structures after 30 years of conflict.

31. The President stated that one of his priorities was governance, which involved building a functioning State that extended throughout the country and ensuring an independent and accountable civil service. The success of the transition to full Afghan sovereignty depended on the extent to which governance could be restructured around a vision shared and articulated with the Afghan people. Given the country's geology and potential for national growth and regional connectivity, this vision is economically feasible. In a country that still ranks 181 out of 182 on the Human Development Index, has the highest infant mortality rate, the second-highest under-five mortality rate and the highest risk of maternal death in the world, clearly much more needs to be done. Afghanistan has the potential to be self-sufficient if it develops its resources effectively and responsibly, and establishes sub-national government that can deliver in practical terms. The Government planned to launch this new vision at the Kabul Conference, which was not a pledging conference but a renewed commitment to the Afghan people and partnership with the international community. This plan, which involves realigning funds behind Afghan priorities, will be practically implemented in a 100-day programme.

32. The mission was further updated on the challenging human rights situation in Afghanistan, which included the issues of violence against women, arbitrary detention and release of prisoners without an adequate legal framework, civilian casualties and a culture of impunity, in addition to little progress in meeting the objectives of the 2005 action plan on peace reconciliation and justice. Long-standing human rights problems associated with dysfunctional governance, entrenched impunity, weak rule of law and justice sector institutions and the marginalization of women pose significant challenges in the immediate and the longer term. UNAMA documented preliminary figures of 968 conflict-related civilian casualties between January and May 2010, up 18 per cent from the same period in 2009. Anti-Government elements remain responsible for the largest proportion of civilian casualties (69 per cent of total civilian casualties) since January. Most civilian casualties were caused by suicide attacks and the indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices as anti-Government elements continued to carry out attacks in a manner that failed to discriminate between civilian and military targets, or to take adequate precautions to prevent civilian casualties. Tactical directives adopted by ISAF appear to have had a positive impact in reducing the number of civilian casualties.

33. Violence against women and girls, including harmful traditional practices, such as the use of girls in marriage to settle disputes (*baad*), so-called "honour" killings, early and forced marriages and rape, is persistent and widespread. Women's participation in public life remains restricted and the political space for women to advocate for their rights has contracted. Attacks on, threats against and harassment of women in public life, or those working outside the home, often by anti-Government elements, occur frequently and, in most cases, go unpunished. Sexual violence against Afghan women and girls continues to be underreported. The misplaced stigma of sexual violence falling on the victim rather than on the perpetrator, as well as lack of access to any form of justice or remedies for victims, has ensured that sexual violence remains largely unaddressed either by Afghanistan's law enforcement institutions or by Afghan society. The UNAMA

Human Rights Unit was observing all processes, including the drafting of recent legislation, to regulate traditional dispute mechanisms and to advocate for further guarantees on women's rights.

34. Representatives of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission highlighted four main areas of concern: a lack of transparency, legitimacy and public support for the Peace Jirga and peace process it initiated; a culture of impunity, which is tolerated by the international community and feeds the insurgency; civilian casualties, especially those perpetrated by anti-Government elements; and the potential for increased displacement owing to security concerns and the lack of income-generating opportunities. The Commission noted that the Government is widely perceived not to take justice issues seriously and that corruption creates mistrust by local communities. It refuted the belief that there is a contradiction between human rights and Afghan culture or religion, insisting that people, even in rural areas, know and want their rights to be respected. However, they noted the importance of the way in which these issues are approached.

35. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission called on the Security Council to note that the lack of justice and the impunity for those who committed crimes feeds insecurity. They asked that "spoilers" be thrown out of the system rather than allowing them to exert pressure on the President and influence appointments of senior officials and judges. Representatives of the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief reiterated that the withdrawal of the international military further fuelled impunity, with undertrained security forces, often linked to warlords as those troops were hurriedly replaced.

36. All civil society representatives highlighted the need for economic opportunities and basic social services, and noted the move from rural to urban areas and the trend towards renewed economic migration from Afghanistan. The Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief pointed out that NGOs work in all 34 provinces and gain access through community acceptance by being inclusive and accountable. It highlighted the need for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to be present and active throughout Afghanistan.

37. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission noted that education served to empower the entire population and, in particular, noted the need for women to access health care and birth control. The Agency Coordinating Body pointed out the effectiveness of microcredit as a means of women's empowerment, but warned that economic development was not enough; political action was also required. The Commission called for positive discrimination to enable women to build their capacity in the workplace and posited that the Taliban would never accept equal rights for women as enshrined in the Constitution. The Agency Coordinating Body pointed out that the Taliban were aware of the importance of education and directed attacks against not only girls' schools but also teachers, students and parents. The Commission noted that of 330 schools closed by the Taliban, 207, or 60 per cent, were girls' schools.

Aid coherence and economic development

38. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General stressed that UNAMA supported the Government's effort to "Afghanize" aid across all three pillars of the Afghan National Development Strategy — security, governance and development — to deliver on its proposed renewed commitment to the Afghan people at the Kabul

Conference. This would be achieved by helping the Government to substantially increase aid flows through the national budget, align aid with its national priorities, improve the effectiveness of off-budget aid and successfully transition to more Afghan control. The Kabul Conference, and the Kabul process it will set in motion, would present, for the first time, a prioritized national agenda for economic development, public finance and administrative reform. This agenda would to be implemented through national priority programmes which, if effectively linked, could provide a framework for a more coherent overall approach and a potential framework for a more targeted and coordinated effort in Afghanistan that could, in turn, shape transition in ways that contribute to prospects for peace.

39. As a potential facilitator of a national-led effort that consolidates and propels these processes, UNAMA, as the co-chair alongside the Government, will engage the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board as the primary vehicle for creating a framework for all partners to guide, monitor and oversee progress on an agreed vision and priorities. It would seek to promote alignment behind the Government's prioritized agenda and national programmes for governance, economic and social development; support the translation of that prioritized national agenda to provinces and districts; encourage sustained efforts to build Afghan leadership capacity at national and subnational levels; promote and support effective partnerships and enhanced mutual accountability in the implementation of the Kabul process; and promote inclusive engagement of communities and civil society actors in this national effort.

40. UNAMA priorities in this area for 2010 would include: (a) enhanced alignment behind the Government's prioritized development strategy ("the clusters"); (b) greater mutual accountability, including through improved effectiveness of off-budget aid; and (c) greater focus on capacity-building at the national and subnational level. In support of its aid coherence mandate, UNAMA will strengthen its partnership with the European Union Special Representative and the strengthened NATO/ISAF Senior Civilian Representative, as well as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, in support of Afghan development priorities.

41. The Special Representative highlighted the appointment of an aid coherence adviser and a realigned aid coherence section in UNAMA. He further added that the comparative advantage of the United Nations in Afghanistan was its large number of agencies and its presence in all 34 provinces. With 21 provincial and regional offices and more than 700 international and 6,000 national staff, the United Nations could support the planned transition of provincial reconstruction teams to civilian control and boost Afghan capacities to lead this transition. The United Nations had been in Afghanistan since the 1960s and would remain there for the long term. The United Nations country team — with 31 agencies, funds and programmes (23 resident, 8 non-resident) and an annual throughput of USD 1 billion — supported the delivery of crucial, tangible services to the Afghan people and worked to build the capacity of the Afghan Government to deliver those services. Only a small number of provinces, primarily those where troop-contributing countries are based, receive the lion's share of funding from bilateral donors. As part of efforts to address this problem, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2010-2013 aimed to align agency work with the priorities set out by the Afghan Government in its National Development Strategy and joint United Nations programmes for under-resourced provinces.

III. Observations

42. The mission took note of the considerable building blocks required to empower the Afghan Government to lead a comprehensive process of transition to greater security, better provision of services and inclusive dialogue, by setting an Afghan-owned and prioritized agenda. The mission was concerned, however, by the increasingly complex security situation in Afghanistan and, in particular, by the increase in violent and terrorist activities by the Taliban, Al-Qaida, illegal armed groups, criminals and those involved in the narcotics trade, which have resulted in threats to the local population, national security forces and international military and civilian personnel. Those activities negatively affected the capacity of the Government to guarantee the rule of law, provide security and basic services to the Afghan people and ensure the improvement and protection of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Council was seriously concerned about the increasingly high number of civilian casualties, the large majority of which were caused by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups, and called for all appropriate measures to be taken to ensure the protection of civilians. The Council was also concerned about the protection of children affected by armed conflict.

43. In that connection, the mission reiterated the need for a transparent, credible and democratic process that preserves stability and security throughout the forthcoming electoral period. It recognized the interconnected nature of the challenges in Afghanistan, reaffirming that sustainable progress on security, governance, human rights, the rule of law and development, as well as on the cross-cutting issues of anti-corruption, counter-narcotics and transparency are mutually reinforcing. The mission stressed the importance of a comprehensive approach in addressing the challenges in Afghanistan and noted the synergies in the objectives of the Afghan Government, UNAMA and the international community. The mission stressed the need for strengthened cooperation, coordination and mutual support, taking due consideration of their respective responsibilities.

44. The mission reiterated the importance of increasing the functionality, professionalism and accountability of the Afghan security sector through a comprehensive framework of appropriate vetting procedures, training, mentoring, equipping and empowering both women and men to accelerate progress towards the goal of self-sufficient and ethnically balanced Afghan security forces that will provide security and uphold the rule of law throughout the country. The mission noted requests for the international community to extend its assistance so that the Afghan National Security Forces would be properly armed and equipped, and thereby able to increasingly assume lead responsibility for security in the country.

45. The mission welcomed the Afghan Government's commitment to develop and implement an effective, inclusive, transparent and sustainable national peace and reintegration programme and expressed appreciation for UNAMA's work in supporting the programme. The mission hoped for increased support from the international community to assist the Government in its efforts, including through a peace and reintegration trust fund.

46. The mission further welcomed the Afghan Government's commitment to preventing irregularities and misconduct during, and to ensuring the integrity of, the 2010 national legislative elections, which are of vital importance to Afghanistan's democratic development. The mission hoped that every effort would be made to

ensure the credibility, safety and security of the elections. During its visit, the mission was apprised of the challenges facing the Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission, but recognized the need for those two bodies to effectively perform their functions of preparing and monitoring elections. The Government of Afghanistan would need to work together with UNAMA to ensure that both entities are strong, independent and provide the proper checks and balances required by the Constitution.

47. The mission was concerned by the effects of corruption on security, good governance, counter-narcotics efforts and economic development, and encouraged the Afghan Government, with the assistance of the international community, to enhance its efforts to establish a more effective, accountable and transparent administration. Nonetheless, the mission was heartened that Afghan institutions, including the executive and legislative branches, had begun to cooperate on legislative and public administration reform with a view to ensuring good governance, with full representation of all Afghan women and men, and accountability at both the national and subnational levels, and encouraged further international efforts to provide technical assistance in this area.

48. The mission looked forward to the outcome of the forthcoming Kabul Conference, which would build on the commitments made at the London Conference Afghanistan, held on 28 January 2010, and which presented an important opportunity to improve aid coordination and effectiveness, including by ensuring mutual accountability.

49. The mission stressed its expectation of full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and international humanitarian law throughout Afghanistan. During its visit, the mission had the opportunity to observe the work of UNAMA with relevant international and local non-governmental organizations and the Government to monitor the situation of civilians to ensure their protection and promote accountability. These efforts were vital in ensuring the full implementation of the fundamental freedoms and human rights provisions of the Afghan Constitution and international treaties to which Afghanistan is a State party, including those regarding the full enjoyment by women of their human rights. It was important to guarantee access to all Afghan prisons and places of detention, and to ensure respect for relevant international law, including humanitarian law and human rights law. Similarly, it would be important to continue progress in the reconstruction and reform of the prison sector in Afghanistan.

50. The mission appreciated the opportunity to observe the work of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission in monitoring respect for human rights in Afghanistan and its efforts to promote the emergence of a pluralistic civil society. It stressed the importance of regional cooperation and dialogue, in particular the initiatives of regional countries in political and economic issues, and was pleased to learn that regional cooperation had become a pillar of Afghan political and security strategies. It encouraged all relevant actors to work with the Commission in support of broad engagement across Government agencies and civil society towards the realization of the mutual commitments made at the London Conference, and those to be made at the Kabul Conference.

51. The mission was encouraged by the work of the United Nations, with the assistance of the international community, in support of the Afghan Government's priorities on the issues of security, governance and economic development and

regional cooperation. It expressed its full support for the three political priorities of UNAMA, elections, reintegration and reconciliation and regional cooperation, and its focus on aid coherence in ensuring that the international community, donors and the contributions of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes alike were realigned behind Afghan Government priorities. It further emphasized the crucial work of UNAMA on human rights. The mission underscored the critical role of UNAMA in assisting the Afghan Government in the transition towards Afghan leadership, including by supporting preparations for the Kabul Conference to be held on 20 July.

52. Finally, the mission expressed its full support for the work of the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and all United Nations personnel in fulfilling their difficult but important tasks and commended their efforts to implement their mandate in Afghanistan. The mission strongly appealed to Member States to provide all necessary human and financial resources to ensure the mission was sufficiently prepared to best deliver on its mandate.

Annex I

Terms of reference of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan

1. To reaffirm the Security Council's continued support for the Government and people of Afghanistan as they rebuild their country, strengthen the foundations of sustainable peace and constitutional democracy and assume their rightful place in the community of nations;

2. To review the progress made by the Afghan Government, with the assistance of the international community, including through capacity-building initiatives, in addressing interconnected challenges in the areas of security, governance, rule of law, human rights, women's rights and empowerment of women, the protection of children affected by armed conflict, economic and social development, regional cooperation and counter-narcotics;

3. To assess the status of implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 1806 (2008), 1868 (2009) and 1917 (2010), as well as of mutual pledges and commitments made by the participants to the London and Istanbul Conferences held in 2010, and looking ahead to the Kabul Conference;

4. To underline the central and impartial role that the United Nations continues to play in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan by leading the civilian efforts of the international community; to express strong support for the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General, including in the area of staff security, and of his new Special Representative for Afghanistan; to reiterate the priorities set out by the Security Council in its resolution 1917 (2010); and to display solidarity with the women and men of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA);

5. To review the implementation of the key coordinating role assigned to UNAMA and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General by the Security Council in its resolution 1917 (2010), taking into account the need for a comprehensive approach and the principle of reinforcing transition towards Afghan ownership and leadership;

6. To review efforts by the Afghan authorities, in support of an Afghan-led development and stabilization process and, with the assistance of the international community, to address the threat to the security and stability of Afghanistan posed by the Taliban, Al-Qaida, illegal armed groups, criminals and those involved in the narcotics trade and in the diversion of chemical precursors;

7. To reaffirm the importance of the effective implementation of measures and application of the procedures introduced by the Council in its resolutions 1267 (1999), 1822 (2008) and 1904 (2009) and other relevant resolutions, and to express support for the cooperation of the Afghan Government and UNAMA with the relevant Security Council sanctions Committee;

8. To review the humanitarian and development situation in the country, including the efforts to increase the proportion of development aid delivered through the Afghan Government and the role of the provincial reconstruction teams, taking into account development priorities of Afghanistan;

9. To assess the cooperation, coordination and mutual support between UNAMA and the International Security Assistance Force, including on humanitarian and human rights issues and in supporting the electoral process, in accordance with their respective mandates;

10. To assess the status of preparation of legislative elections to be held later this year, as well as their credibility, safety and security;

11. To reaffirm the crucial importance of advancing regional cooperation and dialogue as an effective means to promote governance, security and development in Afghanistan.

Annex II

Schedule of meetings of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan

Monday, 21 June 2010

2130	Arrival in Kabul from Istanbul
2200-2230	Meeting with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and security briefing

Tuesday, 22 June 2010

0800-0930	Briefing by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and representatives of the United Nations country team
1015-1145	Visit to the Kabul Military Training Centre
1230-1430	Working lunch with Hâmid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
1500-1630	Joint meeting with the Commander of the International Security Assistance Force and the Senior Civilian Representative of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, briefing on transition
1700-1830	Meeting with Afghan civil society organizations (Afghan Women's Network, Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, Agency Coordination Body for Afghan Relief, Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization)
1930-2130	Reception hosted by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General

Wednesday, 23 June 2010

0900-1025	Meeting with the Independent Electoral Commission
1030-1130	Meeting with the Electoral Complaints Commission
1200-1230	Meeting with the European Union Special Representative
1330-1630	Working lunch with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and meeting with cabinet ministers
1700-1815	Meeting with the Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga and the Chairs of two standing committees
1815-1915	Brainstorming session with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General
1930-2200	Dinner hosted by the Ambassador of Turkey

Thursday, 24 June 2010

0730-0800	Travel from Kabul to Jalalabad
0800-0830	Meeting with the Governor of Nangarhar province
0830-1000	Visit to Sheikh Mesri New Township, meetings with elders and students
1020-1100	Meeting with civilian and military personnel of the Jalalabad provincial reconstruction team
1100-1130	Travel from Jalalabad to Kabul
1200-1245	Press conference at the airport
1300-1900	Travel from Kabul to Istanbul
2000-2200	Reception for the mission and Istanbul retreat participants hosted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey